SCANNED

# A MANUAL

OF

PRACTICAL INSTRUCTIONS REGARDING

# FAMINE RELIEF ADMINISTRATION IN BENGAL.

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# INTRODUCTION.

In this Manual a few practical instructions are given with the object of supplementing the detailed and technical instructions laid down in the Bengal Famine Code. The purpose is to set out briefly the guiding principles of famine administration, to explain the most effective manner of applying those principles, and to furnish suggestions and cautions based on the experience gained in past famines. It is not intended that the Manual should replace the Famine Code itself.

2. It is hoped that this hand-book may be of use to District and Subdivisional Officers who have had no previous experience of famine administration; as also to officers of the Indian Army and other persons employed on famine relief operations, who not merely have no knowledge of the special work of famine relief, but have had no experience of Civil administration at all.

3. The duties of the District Officer in regard to the district as a whole are also those of the Subdivisional Officer in respect of his subdivision.

Ordinarily, therefore, no special reference will be made in this Manual to Subdivisional Officers; and it must be understood that the instructions which are given to District Officers are, generally speaking, intended for them also.

4. The Appendix to this Manual indicates the sections of the Famine Code, and the parts of the Manual, which principally concern the officers of each class who may be employed on famine relief operations. When the instructions thus indicated have been thoroughly mastered by the officers concerned, the rest of the Code and of this Manual should be carefully studied by them.

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# A MANUAL

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PRACTICAL INSTRUCTIONS REGARDING

# FAMINE RELIEF ADMINISTRATION IN BENGAL.

## CHAPTER I.

### STANDING PREPARATIONS.

*(Chapter I of the Code.)*

1. The Famine Code deals, first of all, with the system of intelligence. This provides for the record and compilation, at stated intervals, of accurate information under certain prescribed heads, so that it may be readily available when required.

2. It is at all times incumbent upon the District Officer to make himself thoroughly acquainted with his district; but this is more especially the case if his district is one which is liable to famine. It is upon the District Officer that the Government relies to give the

first warning as to impending famine, to estimate its probable extent, and to suggest the measures which must be taken in order to combat it.

### RAINFALL.

Section 2(*a*) of the Code.

3. The first and most important subject to be noticed is, for obvious reasons, the rainfall. The District Officer should ascertain, by enquiry, and also by observation during his tours, what is the amount of rain that is necessary, and the periods within which the rainfall should occur, in order that the main crops in each thana, or such smaller tract as may be selected as a unit for enquiry, may be secured. He will then be in a position to gauge the probable loss of crops which is indicated by a given failure of rain, and to form an independent, and fairly reliable, forecast of coming events generally.

4. The three main harvests of the year, in their natural sequence, are the *bhadoi* (autumn), the *aghani* (winter), and the *rabi* (spring) crops. Subject to local conditions, which are too numerous and variable to be enumerated, but which must be carefully studied, the general conditions favourable to the *bhadoi* crop are—

(1) early rain to permit of ploughing and sowing; (2) after the seed is sown, sufficient, but not excessive, rain, with intervals of bright sunshine such as to allow of weeding and to prevent blight; and (3) as the crop matures, abundance of moisture, but no floods.

5. For the *aghani* crop, much more rain is required than for the *bhadoi*. Abundant rain is required when the rice is being transplanted; and much damage will occur if the land dries up at this stage, except for very short periods. Intervals of fine weather are required for weeding, and in order that the growing plants may be strengthened. Subsequently, when the crop is maturing, abundant moisture in the soil is needed, in order that the grain may form in the ear. Light showers with sunshine are specially favourable at this period.

6. For the *rabi* crop, there should be abundant moisture in the ground at the close of the rains, a few showers in the latter part of October, and light rain at Christmas time and subsequently when the plants are maturing.

7. The conditions indicated in the three last paragraphs are purposely mentioned in very general terms; and it will rest with the District Officer to supplement the information given in them by special enquiries. If he studies the

statistics of his district for a series of years, he will find that it is quite as important that the rainfall should be suitably distributed as that it should be plentiful

8. Arrangements have been made to supply District Officers with tables showing:—(1) the daily rainfall in respect of all registering stations for each day of the year; (2) the monthly and annual rainfall for a large number of stations; (3) the monthly and annual average rainfall for a large proportion of the stations mentioned under (2); and (4) the rainfall for each month and year, recorded at most of the stations mentioned under (3), as compared with the average rainfall of previous months and years. Besides the above, the review of the monsoon with statistical tables, which is published every year by the Meteorological Reporter, is available in the offices of District Officers. Care should be taken that all the papers above referred to are in order, and that they are easily accessible.

THE ECONOMIC CONDITIONS OF THE DISTRICT.

Section 6 of the Code.

9. The District Officer should make a special study of the normal condition of the people of his district, thana by thana,

and, as far as possible, mauza by mauza. He should ascertain which classes, if any, live from hand to mouth, and which, on the other hand, are prosperous and well-fed, or seem to possess accumulated wealth. In making these enquiries, he should refer to the Census figures, because these will help him to estimate the number of persons in each of the classes indicated. He should study the histories of previous crop failures and famines, if any, with the object of ascertaining what were the losses of crops, and what help had to be given, on those occasions. He should investigate the changes in the general conditions of his district, whether for better or worse, which have taken place of recent years. He should also note:—(1) how far the people derive support from sources which are not purely agricultural; (2) whether there are any special industries or specially productive crops (whether food or other crops); and (3) whether, ordinarily, large numbers of people leave the district for a portion of the year in order to obtain service in other districts. In short, every consideration bearing on the economic conditions of his district should receive his most careful attention.

### OUTTURN OF CROPS AND EFFECT OF LOSSES OF CROPS.

Sections 1, 2, 4 and 56-I (*a*) of the Code.

10. An attempt is made every year to estimate the area under each main crop, and the outturn of such crops, district by district; and the statistics, which are prepared as the result of these enquiries, are published for general information. In districts in which a record-of-rights has been prepared, the areas under each crop in the year in which the survey was made have been abstracted; and these are taken as the normal areas cultivated. Generally, however, and in the absence of the Village Establishment or the Subordinate Revenue Establishment, which is to be found in other parts of India, agricultural statistics are collected through the police. Where this is the case, approximate guesses are made by utilising the total areas of the thanas and of the district, as ascertained by the revenue survey, and by estimating the proportions of these areas which are cultivated with the several crops. Some officers, realising the unreliability of these figures, are apt to pay small attention to the subject, and to accept, with little or no attempt at control, the statistics supplied to them by their subordinates.

District Officers must not, however, forget that experience shows that these crop investigations do give very valuable results; and they must endeavour, by all means in their power, to enhance the correctness of the statistics.

11. Though useful as a guage of the relative importance of the thana, or such smaller tract as may be selected as the unit for enquiry in regard to any given crop, correct statistics as regards areas are not by any means necessary in order to obtain important results. Suppose, for instance, that, in a given year, thana A has 10,000 acres under *aghani* rice, and that thana B has only 5,000 acres under that crop. Then, if thana A has an 80 *per cent.*, and thana B a 50 *per cent.*, crop, the combined area has a 70 $\left(\frac{10,000 \times 80 + 5,000 \times 50}{15,000}\right)$ *per cent.*, and not a 65 $\left(\frac{80 + 50}{2}\right)$ *per cent.*, crop. If, however, the areas referred to are not known, the same result is obtained by merely estimating that thana A grows twice as much *aghani* rice as thana B, no attempt being made to express the areas in acres. In addition to estimating the outturn of the several crops of the district, the District Officer should estimate very carefully the relative importance of the three main harvests of the year, viz., the

*rabi*, the *bhadoi*, and the *agham*. Detailed instructions in the matter of working out crop percentages are given in sections 2 (*c*) and 56-I (*a*) of the Code; while the method of utilising settlement records for the purpose of preparing crop returns and estimates is clearly indicated in the Circular Order of the Board of Revenue No. 7 of September 1903. These orders should be carefully studied.

Sections 2 (*c*) and 56-I (*a*) of the Code.

12. Inasmuch as famine is caused by a failure of crops, and as the extent of the distress involved will largely depend on the outturn of the harvests of previous years, too much trouble cannot be taken in making the crop enquiries above referred to. The District Officer cannot personally verify in every instance the reports which are submitted to him; but, if he selects with care the places in respect of which he will make enquiries, he will be able to do much in the way of checking inaccuracies and exaggerations.

13. The Famine Commission of 1880 (paragraph 77 of their Report) expressed the opinion that pressure, sufficient to require special measures of relief, might occur in a locality if the crop outturn of the year were to fall below 50 *per cent.* of a full crop; and

that intense famine was likely to prevail if the crop outturn of the year were diminished to 25 *per cent.* of a full crop. The subject was again discussed by the Famine Commission of 1898 (paragraphs 340 and 341 of their Report). They showed that there must always be a great element of uncertainty in gauging the degree of the distress which has to be relieved by the outturn of the harvests of the current year; and that, if a true estimate is to be formed, it is necessary to take into account the previous history of each tract, the character of the preceding seasons, and the resources and capacity for self-help of the inhabitants. These opinions merit careful consideration.

### PRICES.

Sections 3 and 4 (3) of the Code.

14. The Code lays down that the range of prices should be carefully watched. Every District Officer has in his office ample records on this subject; and it will be sufficient to observe here that while high prices indicate a general deficiency of produce, they do not, under modern conditions of transport, necessarily indicate a failure of crops in any given district.

PROGRAMMES AND ESTIMATES OF WORKS.

Sections 6 to 27 of the Code.

15. The next subject dealt with in the Code is the preparation of programmes and estimates of works which may be usefully undertaken if famine relief has to be administered. The Code gives full instructions under this head; and here it is only necessary to emphasise the importance of selecting works which, while they will fulfil the purpose of affording relief, will also return the greatest possible value for the money expended. Every District Officer should carefully study the district programmes and estimates, and determine for himself, by personal enquiry and observation, which works are the most suitable. He should classify the various projects in the programmes in the order in which he considers that they should be taken up; and he should leave notes for his successor, showing the grounds of his opinions. If he considers that any works, which are not included in the programmes, should be entered in them, he should make recommendations to that effect. And he should not hesitate, should he consider it necessary, to propose that any given work should be omitted altogether from the programmes, or, on the other hand,

that it should be relegated to a lower position in the order of precedence. The decision of these questions requires a careful and prolonged study of local conditions. If the subject has not been thoroughly considered before a famine occurs, it is certain that many comparatively valueless works will be undertaken when the time for commencing operations arrives. The District Officer should bear in mind that very large sums may have to be expended on relief works, and that the loss to his district will be very great if the most suitable projects are not selected.

PROTECTIVE WORKS.

16. When he is on tour, the District Officer should encourage the construction of wells and irrigation channels which are likely to prove a protection against famine; and he should bring to the notice of the people generally the willingness of Government to grant loans under the Land Improvement Loans Act for such purposes.

CIRCLE ORGANISATION.

17. The District Officer will find in his office a standing list of circles into which his district may conveniently be blocked

Section 29 of the Code.

out for purpose of famine relief. This list should be carefully maintained; and, if this has not already been done, maps should be prepared indicating the various circles. In districts which have been recently surveyed, *mujmilli* maps, that is, index maps of mauzas prepared by the Survey Department, will be found to be the most suitable for the purpose. A list of the mauzas contained in each circle should be attached to the list of circles; and against each mauza should be entered the names of all the villages comprised in it. The *mujmilli* map will show if all the mauzas constituting a circle have been duly entered against it; while a reference to the Census lists of villages, supplemented, if necessary, by local enquiries, will disclose whether all the villages comprised in a mauza have been duly recorded against it. In districts for which *mujmilli* maps have not been prepared, the best maps available should be used; the procedure indicated above being otherwise closely followed.

Section 29 of the Code.

18. It is suggested in the Code that a combination of *duffadari* areas, formed under the Village Chaukidari Act, VI (B.C.) of 1870, will form a convenient famine circle. Where, however, there are planters or

managers of estates who are willing and able to render assistance, it may be desirable to modify this grouping, so as to assign to such persons the areas which they know well, and over which they have influence.

# CHAPTER II.

## WHEN DISTRESS IS ANTICIPATED AND WHEN FAMINE IS AT HAND

*(Chapters II and III of the Code).*

### PRELIMINARY MEASURES.

Section 32 of the Code.

19. It is of the utmost importance to put heart into the people by letting them know that the authorities are making all necessary preparations, and are maintaining an attitude of sleepless vigilance. It must be remembered that moral depression leads to physical deterioration.

Section 54 of the Code

20. When it is anticipated that there will be famine, the District Officer must watch carefully for signs confirming this view. Even when it is known that there must be, or even when there has been, a great loss of crops, it is still most

difficult to guage whether any, and, if so, what amount of, relief may have to be given. It is, therefore, laid down in the Code that, when he has made all necessary preparations, the District Officer must wait upon events and devote himself to careful observation.

### DANGER SIGNALS.

Section 54 of the Code.

21. The first danger signal is the unusual wandering of paupers. This is a very reliable warning, because this class feels very quickly any contraction of private charity. Next comes the contraction of credit. Then follows feverish activity in the grain trade, which may, however, be due largely to causes operating outside the district. Restlessness shown in an increase of crime is a sign which requires careful examination. Arson is often unusually frequent in times of famine. Robberies of grain from the shops of grain-merchants are also not uncommon. Unusual movements of flocks and herds in search of pasturage are not common in Bengal, because fodder is sometimes plentiful even when crops are poor; the rice-stalks often being suitable for fodder even when no grain has formed in the ears. If there is unusual wandering of persons, other

than paupers and the infirm, it is probable that they are in search of work; and it may be necessary to open test works. If the infirm, other than paupers, begin to wander in any great numbers, it is almost certain that gratuitous relief is called for.

### PREPARATIONS.

Sections 56 and 57 of the Code.

22. While waiting for the development of famine, the District Officer should collect materials for the reports which he may have to submit, in accordance with the provisions of sections 56 and 57 of the Code. If there have been previous occasions of distress in his district, his estimate of the numbers likely to require relief, and of the cost of the anticipated relief measures, should be based on past experience.

23. All the instructions contained in Chapter II of the Code are important, and should be carefully studied. In addition to the various measures therein prescribed, the District Officer should fix upon a suitable site for the head-quarters of the Charge Superintendent. In this respect, he should be guided mainly by a consideration of the system of communications, it being essential that every

part of a charge should be easily accessible from its head-quarters; but the accommodation available for an office and dwelling-house for the Charge Superintendent may also be a determining factor.

### TEST WORKS.

Section 54 of the Code.

24. One of the earliest means of ascertaining whether relief is necessary is the opening of test works. Action in this respect, however, in advance of actual needs involves great risk of extravagance and demoralisation. The District Officer must, therefore, be very careful not to be led away by false rumours; and he must remember that his personal supervision at this stage is of cardinal importance.

Sections 60 to 65 of the Code.

25. When test works are considered advisable, a preliminary test may sometimes be conveniently tried by the opening of a work in the locality where famine is anticipated under ordinary conditions, but with Famine Code rates of payments. This measure can, of course, only be taken, provided that the Code rates are not higher than the ordinary district rates. If, owing to exceptionally high

prices of food-grains, the Code rates are higher than ordinary rates, it is only possible to open test works under strict Famine Code conditions: otherwise, labour will be drawn away from private work, and a false impression will be created as regards the real demand for relief work. When works are opened under Famine Code conditions, and the Code rates are high, special measures, such as those indicated in section 62 of the Code, may sometimes have to be taken. In such cases also, the District Officer must take care that the tasks set are not either too easy or too severe. In the former case, people will crowd to the works, whether they are in actual need of relief or not; while, in the latter, they will be discouraged from offering themselves for relief, even though they are in real distress.

# CHAPTER III.

## WHEN FAMINE IS DECLARED

(*Chapters IV and V of the Code*).

### GENERAL INSTRUCTIONS.

26. It will generally be necessary for the District Officer to appoint a member of his staff at the Sadar station to act as Subdivisional Officer in respect of famine work in the Sadar subdivision, and also to assist him in his famine work generally at head-quarters, so that he himself may be more free to make tours of inspection throughout his district.

27. Inasmuch as the duty of instructing Charge Superintendents, Officers in Charge, and Circle Officers will fall principally upon the Subdivisional Officers, the District Officer should take particular care that these last-

named officers are fully instructed as to the proper methods of procedure. In this matter a few practical lessons will be of more value than many written instructions.

Sections 96 and 97 of the Code.

28. The Charge Superintendent is an officer who is placed in charge of famine relief operations in respect of a specified area. All Circle Officers and officers in charge of non-departmental works are directly subordinate to him. As regards works conducted by the Public Works Department, his duties are limited to ascertaining whether the provisions of the Famine Code are being duly carried out and that everything is in order. Until a Charge Superintendent is appointed, the Subdivisional Officer will carry out the duties assigned by the Code to that officer.

29. A Charge Superintendent should be personally instructed in his duties by the Subdivisional Officer, both in the field and in the office, until he has fully mastered the nature of the work which he will have to perform. He should spend at least one day in studying the actual working of a well-managed relief work. He should be present when a relief work is being inspected by the Subdivisional Officer, the District Engineer, or some other

experienced officer; and should observe the manner in which the inspection is carried out. He should learn how to check the gratuitous relief list. He should also spend some hours in the office of the District Officer, and be thoroughly instructed in the system of accounts according to which he will have to work his own office.

30. A good map should be given to the Charge Superintendent, on which should be marked all the circles, head-quarters of Circle Officers, public and village relief works, public roads, rest-houses, and public offices, such as thanas, outposts, registration offices, &c., included in his charge. This map should render him independent of guides.

31. The Charge Superintendent should be provided with two or more horses. Valuable horses should not be provided because they are apt to break down under the rough usage to which they are subjected. Strong and hardy country-bred ponies, if they can be procured, are the most suitable animals.

32. The District Officer should utilise the services of the District Engineer in the training of officers who are to be placed in charge of relief works; and, at the commencement of operations, a well managed work near head-

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quarters should, if possible, be selected as a school for the instruction of such officers. At a later stage, other works under suitable management can be utilised for the same purpose in each subdivision or charge. In order, however, to secure a uniform and good standard of work at the initial stages, a relief work where the personal supervision of the District Officer and District Engineer is, to some extent, possible, will generally be found to be most suitable.

Section 74 of the Code.

33. Circle Officers should be trained in the practice of selecting recipients of gratuitous relief by Subdivisional Officers and Charge Superintendents in the manner laid down in section 74 of the Famine Code. Maps of their circles, showing the details mentioned in paragraph 30 above, should be supplied to these officers.

Sections 280 to 292, 298 to 311, and 314 of the Code.

34. The prescribed system of accounts, and the forms of the registers of account, are very simple. It will, however, be necessary that officers of all classes should be given full instruction in regard to them, before they are allowed to take charge of relief operations.

35. If a Subdivisional Officer is unable to carry on his ordinary duties in addition to his famine work, a Deputy Collector should be posted to the subdivision for the purpose of helping in the disposal of work unconnected with relief operations. Such a Deputy Collector is termed in the Code an "Assistant Subdivisional Officer."

Section 95 of the Code.

36. The District Officer should endeavour to secure as much assistance as he can from non-official agency. He must, however, be on his guard against making complimentary appointments. The honorary appointments which he makes must be made with the single purpose of obtaining material assistance from persons who are willing to do really hard work.

Section 40 of the Code.

## EQUIPMENT LISTS.

37. The District Officer should pay careful attention to the matter of equipment, and should prepare lists showing the requirements of officers of each class. In paragraph 6, Appendix II, of

Chapter II of App. II, and App. V, of the Code.

the Code, a list is given of requirements in respect of relief works; while an estimate of the supply of forms required by officers of each class is furnished in Appendix V. The preparation of equipment lists will save trouble and prevent mistakes when an office is opened. It will also indicate the stock of each kind of article which the District Officer should accumulate for purposes of distribution.

### CORRESPONDENCE.

38. In order to obviate confusion in the office of the District Officer, due provision should be made for the large increase of correspondence which inevitably takes place in connection with famine. In the beginning of the operations, such correspondence is usually classified under the head of "Famine" in one or two "files" belonging to a single "collection." When, however, distress is fully declared, a separate "department" for famine correspondence should be opened, with the requisite number of "collections" and "files" and with separate registers of "letters received" and "letters issued," and a special "index register."

## MILITARY OFFICERS.

Section 97 of the Code and paras. 5 and 70 of App. II.

39. The services of Military officers are engaged as soon as it is apparent that there will be a large number of people on relief works for a considerable period. These officers will frequently be appointed as Charge Superintendents; but they will also have to undertake such other duties as may be assigned to them.

# CHAPTER IV.

## DURING FAMINE.

### GENERAL PRINCIPLES OF ADMINISTERING RELIEF.

#### DURING FAMINE.

40. The Code contemplates broadly the administration of two systems of relief. In one case, the labourer receives a fixed remuneration in return for work done; while, in the other, the relief administered takes the form, more or less, of charity.

#### RELIEF IN RETURN FOR WORK

*(Chapters VI and VII, and Appendix II, of the Code).*

41. Three Famine Commissions have emphasised the importance of the principle that relief should, so far as possible, be administered, so as not to diminish the self-respect of the

people, or to impair the structure of society, "which, resting as it does in India upon the moral obligation of mutual assistance, is admirably adapted for common effort against common misfortune." The cardinal principal of famine relief, therefore, is that, if a person is capable of labour, relief shall only be given to him in return for work done.

Sections 130 to 135 of the Code.

42. The conditions of the work provided should be sufficiently severe to deter all persons, except those who are in real want, from having recourse to the State for assistance. On the other hand, various safeguards are provided in the Code with the object of preventing the labour test from acting harshly. Of these, the most important are that (1) a half task may be assigned to those who are really so weak as to be unable to do a full task; and (2) that those who are unable to perform even a half task should be relegated to easy work, such as clod-breaking. In the former case the full wage, and in the latter the allowance payable to dependents, is given in return for the labour performed. The District Officer and all superior famine relief officers must pay unremitting attention to the manner in which relief work officers grant these concessions.

The greatest discrimination in this respect is required; and the success of the operations will largely depend upon the amount of care which is taken in the matter.

Sections 130, 140, 141, 163 and 109 of the Code.

43. Experience shows that persons who live very close to a relief work are apt to resort to it, even when they are not in actual need of relief. The Indian raiyat is extremely averse from leaving his village. If, however, he finds work provided for him close to his home, he will often take advantage of it, whatever his circumstances may be. Landlords and others will sometimes send to a relief work labourers whom, but for the existence of the work, they would employ privately. It may also happen that, though private employment is available on fair terms, the labourers will prefer to resort to the famine relief works. To meet such contingencies, the Code lays down that where works are provided in the vicinity of the villages of the people in distress, and no especial reasons to the contrary exist, more stringent conditions as regards the tasks, relief to dependents, the rest day allowance and wages, shall prevail, than where the majority of the workers have to travel a long

distance daily in order to reach a work, or have to leave their villages in order to reside at a work, or where other special circumstances exist. The Code also provides that, in certain circumstances, admission to works may be regulated by selection. It is, however, strictly enjoined that this method of eliminating the undeserving is not to be attempted without the express orders of the Local Government.

44. As indicated in the last paragraph, it is often extremely difficult to judge how far relief is actually required. It is easy to see whether an applicant for relief is emaciated. But it is, above all things, necessary to prevent people from becoming reduced by actual starvation. To permit this to happen is to fail signally in famine relief administration. So long as the labourers do not actually appear to be suffering from want of food, it is probable that they have some resources. Their means may, however, be extremely slender; and, if this is the case, a delay of even a very few days may prove fatal. A sufficient number of relief works to employ all who may apply must, therefore, be opened in ample time, so that all who are able-bodied and really require relief may be supplied with work without delay.

Section 130 (*a*) and (*b*), and para. 36 (i) (*a*) and (*b*), App. II, of the Code.

45. The fixing of the tasks to be performed by the labourers is one of the most difficult subjects to be dealt with. Provisional scales of tasks are laid down in section 130 (*a*) and (*b*), and paragraph 36 (i), (*a*) and (*b*), Appendix II, of the Code. It will, however, be the duty of the District Officer to consider carefully, as famine operations proceed, how far these scales should be modified as a result of fresh experience gained. Tasks on a relief work must, of necessity, be fixed in a more or less arbitrary manner; conditions varying considerably at different places. It is for the District Officer to see that the tasks prescribed are severe enough to require real labour, but not so severe as to be unreasonable.

Foot-note to section 108, and section 130, (*a*)and(*b*). of the Code.

46. The scales of tasks which have been provisionally adopted have been prepared with regard to the amount of work commonly performed at the time of year by agricultural labourers in ordinary times. Professional labourers will, therefore, find the work set unusually easy. Such labourers should, therefore, if practicable, be drafted off to works (if any) which are being

conducted under the ordinary rules of the Public Works Department. As the foot-note to section 108 of the Code indicates, works of this nature are sometimes undertaken.

Foot-note to section 108 of the Code.

47. Care must be taken to see that the tasks enforced at the various works do not vary materially in difficulty: otherwise, there will be disastrous migration from one work to another.

### GRATUITOUS RELIEF

(*Chapter VIII of the Code*).

48. As shown above, the people themselves determine, in the case of relief given in return for work, whether they will avail themselves of it or not. In the case, however, of gratuitous relief, it rests with the District Officer to fix the time when the distribution of it should commence. The decision of this question will always be a matter of the very greatest difficulty. In Bengal, there are numerous persons who, even in ordinary times, eke out a livelihood by means of begging; and when famine is at hand, this class not infrequently begins to wander in search of food. The District Officer then has to decide whether the time has arrived at which the natural

supporters of these people are either unable or unwilling to perform their customary obligations. Even if the distribution of gratuitous relief is begun in good time, it is often difficult to decide how far it is right to extend it. This difficulty is further enhanced by a tendency on the part of the public in general to regard profusion in this matter as, at most, a venial fault. In the case of relief in return for work, the test is self-acting. All persons willing to labour are provided with work; and it is assumed that, if the task is sufficiently severe, the great mass at least of those who do not require relief will be deterred from seeking help from Government. Gratuitous relief, however, can be regulated by personal selection only; and the success of the operations will mainly depend upon the amount of care with which the relief lists are prepared and maintained.

Sections 141 to 144 of the Code.

49. The rules regulating the grant of gratuitous relief to dependents on works are laid down in sections 141 to 144, Chapter VI, of the Code. Inasmuch as village works will form the backbone of relief in Bengal, no relief will usually be given to dependents at works. Where, however, these persons are entitled to relief, under section

141 (*b*), they shall, as far as possible, be drafted off to their villages. This procedure is desirable both because dependents usually constitute an impediment to discipline on works and also because persons who are already in receipt of gratuitous relief in their villages will often also try to obtain it at relief works by representing themselves as dependents of workers.

Section 184 of the Code.

50. As indicated in section 184 of the Code, work should, as far as possible, be exacted from persons in receipt of gratuitous relief in their villages in return for the assistance given to them. This is particularly desirable in the case of high caste *purdanashin* women. Such persons may be given work befitting their condition, such as spinning cotton or winding silk. The making of ropes, string or baskets is another form of work which will be found to be suitable.

### OTHER FORMS OF RELIEF.

(*Chapters IX, XI, XII, and XIII, of the Code*).

51. Such remarks as appear to be required on the subject of poor-houses and kitchens will be found in paragraphs 98 to 100 of this Manual. It will seldom be necessary in Bengal

to make arrangements for the grant of special relief to aboriginal tribes. No orphanages were opened in this province in 1897; neither was any special relief given to weavers and other artizans.

# CHAPTER V.

## RELIEF WORKS, WAGES AND ALLOWANCES AND SANITATION.

*(Chapters VI, VII and XVI, and Appendices II, III and IV, of the Code).*

### RELIEF WORKS.

Section 71, and App. II, of the Code.

52. As soon as test works have served their purpose as an indication of the presence of distress, no time should be lost in converting them into relief works. A very full account of the way in which relief works should be managed is given in Appendix II of the Code. Here, it is only intended to give a brief description of the organisation best adapted for this class of relief, particularly in its preliminary stages, and to suggest a few safeguards and precautions which it would be advisable to adopt.

53. The following points require special attention before a relief work is opened:—

(1) The employment of a sufficient and an efficient establishment, so that it may be possible to enforce the prescribed tasks.

(2) Provision for the accommodation of the establishment on the work.

(3) Provision for the necessary forms required for carrying on the daily routine of work.

(4) Provision for tools and plant.

(5) Arrangements for (*a*) drinking-water, (*b*) a market, (*c*) the treatment of the sick, and (*d*) conservancy.

(6) Arrangements for financing the Officer in Charge.

(7) The fixing of the diggers' and carriers' tasks.

(8) The supply, to the Officer in Charge, of a copy of the task tables given in paragraph 36 (i), (*a*) and (*b*), Appendix II, of the Code, or of such other tables as may be substituted for them.

(9) The supply, to the Officer in Charge, of tables of wages.

(10) The levelling, if possible, of the ground before the task is set out, and the removal or effacing of all mounds of earth, or so-called "witnesses," showing the amount of work done on previous occasions.

Sections 136 to 138 of the Code.

54. These arrangements may appear somewhat elaborate; but there are special reasons for sparing no trouble at the initial stage. One of the most common experiences of famine officers is that a rush takes place on relief works at the beginning of the operations, and that the staff is liable to be overpowered, unless very careful preliminary arrangements have been made. The best safeguard against such a state of affairs is the enforcement of the prescribed tasks, in the first instance, supposing that the system laid down in section 136 of the Code is in force. Whether that system or the alternative one referred to in section 137 is in force, it is essential that the tasks should be laid out in advance, so that, when a crowd of labourers arrives, the exact conditions of their work may be shown to them without any initial delay. The taking of these precautions at the beginning of a famine will save Government

much expenditure and the staff much trouble and worry. If, owing to mismanagement, the establishment does, in fact, become overpowered, there is no alternative but to have recourse to the provisions of section 138 of the Code, which provides for the grant to the workers of the allowances payable to dependents, until the defects are remedied.

Paragraph 2, App. II, of the Code.

55. The scale of establishment necessary for a charge of 3,000 labourers is given in paragraph 2, Appendix II, of the Code. It is advisable to appoint the full establishment, in anticipation of that number of workers demanding employment. It will soon be seen whether people are likely to crowd to the work or not; and, if the numbers settle down to some approximately constant figure, the staff can be modified accordingly. If the numbers increase beyond 3,000, a new charge should be formed; and it will be desirable that it should be formed, in the first instance, at the site of the original work. If the work is a large one, it may be convenient to employ the newly-formed charge there; but it will usually be desirable, as soon as the necessary arrangements have been organised, to draft it to some other work.

Paragraph 23, App. II, of the Code.

56. Accommodation should be provided for the staff as soon as possible, in the manner indicated in paragraph 23, Appendix II, of the Code. Usually, the huts will be built by special gangs, who may be paid according to the rates laid down in sections 163 and 164 of the Code, as the case may be, as payable to persons in class A. Inasmuch as the conditions of famine work are hard, and as members of the staff are apt to abscond, unless their comfort is duly considered, the accommodation provided should be on a fairly liberal, although not extravagant, scale. It should be borne in mind that additional accommodation will probably be required, if the work is one which has been selected for the purpose of training newly-recruited famine officers

App. V of the Code.

57. The scale of forms for a relief work is given in Appendix V of the Code. It will often be convenient to use slip headings, because these can be readily pasted on to pieces of blank paper. In order, however, to prevent the commission of frauds, specially prepared ruled paper should be used for the muster-rolls, the necessary supply being obtained from the Controller of Printing, Stationary and

Stamps, India. These special forms should be kept under lock, and should be stamped by the issuing offices, that is, the offices of the Executive Engineer, the Charge Superintendent or the Officer in Charge, as the case may be; while special stock-books should be kept showing receipts and issues in respect of them. Inspecting officers should invariably initial these forms, whenever they examine them.

Paragraph 6, App. II, of the Code.

58. The scale of equipment for a new charge is given in paragraph 6, Appendix II, of the Code. It will be observed that, although a charge usually contains about 3,000 persons, the scale provides for an equipment sufficient for 6,000 labourers. The object of this provision is that there may be no lack of tools and other necessaries, supposing that there is a rush of workers at the beginning of the operations.

Chaps. IV, V, VI, and VIII of Appendix II of the Code.

59. The arrangements for drinking-water, a market, the treatment of the sick, and conservancy, are fully dealt with in Chapters IV, V, VI, and VIII of Appendix II of the Code.

60. As regards the financing of the Officer in Charge, the object to be aimed at is to keep him in funds, but, at the same time, not to allow him to retain too large a balance. The matter is dealt with in Chapter III of Appendix II of the Code, and in section 329(1) of the Code.

Chap. III of App. II, and section 329(1), of the Code.

61. The provisionally prescribed tasks are to be found in section 130, (*a*) and (*b*), and paragraph 36 (i), (*a*) and (*b*), Appendix II, of the Code. The ordinary tasks where works are provided in the vicinity of the villages of the people in distress, and no special reasons to the contrary exist, are those to be found in section 130 (*a*) of the Code. The District Officer has power, however, under section 130 (*b*) of the Code, subject to the approval of the Local Government, to introduce less stringent tasks where he considers it to be necessary to do so. In either case, it will be seen that the digger's task varies with the class of soil. Intimation as to the class of soil which should be adopted in respect of each work will be given to the Officer in Charge by the Executive Engineer, or the Charge Superintendent,

Sections 130, (*a*) and (*b*), 132, and paragraph 36 (i), (*a*) and (*b*), App. II, of the Code and paragraph 43 of this Manual.

as the case may be. The Officer in Charge is authorised to decide this matter for himself only in cases of urgency ; and, in such cases, he must at once report his action to his superior officer for orders. The carrier's task depends upon the distance to which the earth has to be carried, and the height to which it has to be lifted. It is considered sufficient that it should be calculated for variations of 50 feet of lead and 3 feet of lift, and that it should be increased or decreased by not less than 5 feet at a time.

Section 131 of the Code.

62. The District Officer may, for sufficient reason, vary the tasks from time to time; and the considerations which should determine him in so doing are noticed in section 131 of the Code, and paragraphs 45 and 47 of this Manual.

Paragraph 36(i), (*a*) and (*b*), App. II, and Form C—VI (*a*) to (*d*) of the Code.

63. Printed copies of the tables of tasks, as given in paragraph 36(i), (*a*) and (*b*), Appendix II, of the Code, or of such other tables as may be prescribed in place of them, should be supplied to the Officer in Charge. Printed copies of the wages-tables [Form C—VI (*a*) to (*d*)] should also be sent to him; the particular

column of the wages-tables (*a*) or (*b*), as the case may be, which is to be adopted being notified to him from time to time.

64. If it is proposed to re-excavate a tank which has water in it, all the water in it should be baled out before work is started. The surface of the bed of tank should then, as far as practicable, be levelled by special gangs; and the distance to which spoil may be thrown should be definitely marked out. If work is to be done on a road, all so-called "witnesses" should be removed, and any old pits that may be found should be levelled.

### LAYING OUT OF THE TASKS.

65. It is of the utmost importance that the work to be done should be marked out well in advance of requirements.

66. A good method of laying out the task, in the case of a tank, is that indicated in the diagram given in paragraph 37, Appendix II, of the Code. All the pits should be dug to the depth of two feet. Pegs should be fixed at the corners of each of the 20-feet squares; and these big squares should be first

Paragraph 37, App. II, of the Code.

dealt with. It will be observed that each such square provides work for four diggers daily (20 × 20 × 2, = 800, cubic feet), where tasks under section 130 (*a*) are being enforced. After these squares have been dealt with, the connecting narrow spaces should next be treated. It will be noticed that each of these provides a digger's task (20 × 5 × 2, = 200, cubic feet). Finally, there will be left the small 5-feet squares. Four of these, taken together, provide a digger's task (4 × 5 × 5 × 2, = 200, cubic feet). The above tasks having been completed, a layer of two feet will have been taken out from the entire bed of the tank. The same procedure can then be repeated till the required depth is reached.

Paragraph 37, App. II, of the Code.

67. In order to fix the carrier's task, it is, first of all, necessary to ascertain the lift and lead in respect of any given pit. If the tank has been marked out in the manner indicated in the diagram at paragraph 37, Appendix II, of the Code, but few measurements will be required. When such measurements as are necessary have been made, the table of tasks for carriers should be

referred to. It will be observed that column 1 shows the leads and that the lifts are entered against this column horizontally; while columns 2 to 8 show the various tasks at each particular combination of lead and lift. If the number of cubic feet representing the digger's task be divided by the number of cubic feet representing the carrier's task, the quotient will indicate the number of carriers required for each digger.

Paragraph 36 (i), (*b*). App. II, of the Code.

68. In the case of road work, the fixing of the tasks of the diggers is more complicated than in the case of tank work, owing to the fact that it is less practicable, specially in the case of old roads, to dig pits of a uniform depth or to preserve regular lines. A system of measurement of each individual pit is, therefore, necessary in this case. Owing to these difficulties and to the scattered nature of the work, it is, ordinarily, more difficult to maintain discipline on road than on tank work.

69. Pits should not be dug to any considerable depth along the sides of roads, because, if this is done, the adjoining fields are likely to be damaged.

### ORGANISATION OF GANGS AND SUB-GANGS.

Sections 125 to 129, and paragraphs 28 to 35, App. II, of the Code.

70. It is a matter of the first importance to allow, so far as possible, the workers to make their own arrangements as regards the organisation of the gangs. The basis of the gang is the sub-gang. This will, usually, consist of one digger and his carriers; but all the diggers and carriers belonging to a single pit may, if necessary, be combined so as to form a sub-gang. The number of workers in a gang should not usually be allowed to exceed one hundred. Workers of different villages or neighbourhoods should, so far as possible, be kept in separate gangs; while members of different families, inclusive of their dependents, should be assigned to separate sub-gangs. The strong men among the workers will, for obvious reasons, ordinarily be appointed as diggers; but, if there are more men of this class than are necessary, the surplus number may be employed as carriers, each man being required to perform one and-a-half times a carrier's task in return for the digger's wage. Conversely, if the number of carriers is excessive, the surplus number

Foot-note 1 to sections 163 and 164 and 3 to Forms C—VI (*a*) and (*b*) of the Code.

may be employed as diggers, each carrier being given two-thirds of a digger's task, and being paid one pice more than the carrier's wage. In the case of tank work, where the lead and lift are often considerable, it will frequently be necessary to employ strong men as carriers. On the other hand, in the case of road work, the total number of carriers required is comparatively small, and it will be necessary to employ the weaker among the men, and sometimes women also, as diggers. If any workers are considered to be so weak that they cannot perform the prescribed task, they should be given a half task, but should still be paid the full wage.* When such persons are appointed as carriers, the procedure is a very simple one, two of them being appointed to do the work of one normal carrier. It will rarely be necessary to appoint weakly persons as diggers. When the full gang has been formed, it should be directed to elect a mate. This man will then be responsible for the work of the gang. Where dependents are entitled, under section 141 (*b*) of the Code, to relief, only such as cannot be separated from their natural protectors should be re-

Section 135 of the Code.

* Attention is drawn to paragraphs 127 and 128 of the Famine Code regarding gangs of weakly persons.

tained on the work; the rest being drafted off to their villages and placed under the care of the Circle Officer. Nursing mothers should be given only a half task. They will receive the full carrier's wage, *plus* an extra pice.

THE MUSTER-ROLL AND CONNECTED FORMS.

Form C—VII (a), and Chapter XI of Appendix II, of the Code.

71. On the first day on which a relief work is opened, the gangs should be allowed to begin work *before* the muster-roll is filled up. This is desirable because—(1) a good many workers will probably abscond when they have once ascertained what the prescribed tasks are, and (2) it may be necessary, at the commencement of the work, to make adjustments as regards the relative numbers of diggers and carriers. The muster-roll should be written up as soon as work has been fairly started; and, after that, it should be changed as little as possible. The gangs under each muharrir, and the sub-gangs in each gang, will be numbered in separate serial order. The numbers assigned to the pits will follow those given to the sub-gangs. Full instructions are given at pages 168 and 169 of the Code as regards the method of filling up the muster-roll and the forms connected with it, viz., the muharrir's daily abstracts, the

charge day-book, and the weekly voucher for wages and allowances. These instructions should be very carefully studied.

### NO PAYMENT TO BE MADE UNTIL THE TASK IS COMPLETED.

Section 136 of the Code.

72. As indicated in paragraph 54 special attention should be paid to the provisions of section 136 of the Code, *where the system prescribed by that section is in force.* The greatest care should be taken that payments are not delayed when once the tasks have been completed, nothing being so certain to produce demoralisation as want of promptitude in this matter. On the other hand, it is no less necessary to sternly refuse payments until the prescribed tasks have been finished. When a worker is first assigned his task, he should be told *that he will be paid only when the task has been completed, and that no part or advance payment will, on any account, be made.* It is probable that many workers will not have completed their tasks by the end of the first day. If that is the case, they should be directed to finish them on the following morning. On that day, as soon as a worker has finished his uncompleted task of

the previous day, a new task should immediately be assigned to him, so that he may be allowed an opportunity of making up for lost time and of completing his task for the second day before the close of that day. As it is extremely difficult to remedy defects when once mismanagement has occurred, it is particularly necessary that the system, above described, should be strictly enforced at the outset, when the arrangements are taking shape. This can, however, only be done *if the prescribed tasks are suited to the powers of the workers.* The system under consideration assumes that the worker is physically able to do the task set, and that, if he fails to do it, he does so through contumacy, and not owing to inability. The greatest possible care, therefore, must be taken in order to ascertain which workers are really incapable of performing the prescribed task. It will be easy to pick out the infirm old men and women, and to assign to them light work, such as clod-breaking; but it will always be very difficult to select the workers to whom a half task only should be assigned.

73. Under the system described in the last paragraph payment should be made on the day following that on which the task has been completed, and should not usually be delayed after

12 o'clock on that day. On the other hand, under the alternative system prescribed in section 137 of the Code payments must be made in all cases daily. In either case, the money may most conveniently be given to the gang while they are at work. If possible, payment should be made to each individual; but, if this is not practicable, it should be made, at least, to each digger and his carriers separately. It should only be made jointly to a sub-gang or gang if the members of it have chosen some one from among themselves to represent them. In such cases, payment should be made in the presence of all the members of the sub-gang or gang. Care should be taken that payment is made individually to any workers who do not belong to the family which constitutes the basis of the sub-gang.

Section 139, and paragraph 49, App. II, of the Code.

74. Under the system prescribed in section 136 of the Code, there will, it will be observed, be no fining of workers for short work; and laziness and contumacy will meet automatically with their natural consequences. On the other hand, if the alternative system prescribed by section 137 of the Code is in force, payments are made daily for work actually done by

Sections 136 and 137 of the Code.

fourths, subject to a minimum of one-fourth.

SUPERVISION AND CONTROL.

Sections 119, 146(*a*) and 147, and paragraphs 41 and 43, App. II, of the Code.

75. As far as possible, supervision and control should be exercised by means of personal inspections carried out on the spot. The weekly return (Form C—I) will, however, be of material assistance to controlling officers. This return will show (1) the number of persons employed in executing the work in hand, (2) the wages actually earned by them, and (3) the wages which should have been earned by them if they had performed the prescribed tasks. A comparison of these items will show whether work is progressing steadily or otherwise. The return also contrasts the rate paid for work done during the week under review, and since the operations commenced, with the normal petty contract rate. The inspecting officer will, therefore, find ready to hand all the most important information that is required by him.

Paragraph 62, Appendix II, of the Code.

76. Check measurements of the work actually done should be made for the purpose of comparing the results with the

work which is shown in the returns as having been executed. Where estimates have been previously made in respect of a work, they will be useful, for purposes of check, when the work is completed. As indicated in paragraph 62, Appendix II, of the Code, it is convenient to check work by sections. Unscrupulous officers will endeavour to evade check measurements by making fictitious entries of weakly individuals in the returns. A worker so classified is accountable for only a half task, but is given a full wage. If, therefore, two weakly individuals are shown in the returns as each drawing a full wage, when, in fact, a single able-bodied worker has been employed, the object is, presumably, to misappropriate one full wage. Great strictness must, accordingly, be enforced in the matter of weakly workers; and the absence of persons so classified on the day of inspection must be viewed with much suspicion. The inspecting officer must also take care that he is not imposed upon, on the occasions of his inspections, by dependents or other persons wrongfully personating weakly individuals.

77. A sudden and great rise in the numbers on a particular relief work, unaccompanied by a general increase in the number of workers,

should be made the subject of the earliest possible local enquiry. It will almost always be found to be due to the fact that the labourers have discovered a work where discipline is slack, and where it is comparatively easy to earn the famine wage.

Chap. XII of App. II of the Code.

78. The checks which should be applied by inspecting officers are given in detail in Chapter XII of Appendix II of the Code. The inspections should be as frequent as possible; and they should, as often as possible, be made without previous notice given.

79. It is important, on such occasions, to ascertain whether the work has been well laid out in advance, and whether the pits have been marked symmetrically, so as to facilitate measurement and check and the allotment of tasks. If such precautionary measures have not been taken, it will almost always be found that there has been delay in assigning their tasks to the workers, and consequent difficulty on their part in completing their work day by day.

80. Special care should be taken to ascertain whether there has been any tampering with the muster-rolls, and whether these documents correctly represent the facts stated in

them. The number of labourers in each gang should be counted, and the results should be compared with the entries in the returns.

81. It may happen that the confusion discovered at a relief work is so great that it is desirable that all the books should be completely examined. Should this be the case, it will probably be advisable that the investigation should be made by a special officer or clerk deputed for the purpose from head-quarters. It will take time to elicit the true state of affairs; and it is important that the inspecting officer should be free to carry on his duties in other parts of the district. If it is clear that a fraud has been committed, the inspecting officer should at once suspend the officers concerned, pending further inquiry, and report the matter to the District Officer or the Superintending Engineer, as the case may be. There is nothing more demoralising than the retention of a staff which has been proved to be dishonest. In order that there may be no delay as regards the provision of the new staff required on such occasions, it is essential that, as contemplated by section 53 of the Code, a reserve establishment should be maintained.

Section 53 of the Code.

SANITATION.

82. The matter left for final mention is one to which too great importance cannot be attached. It is that of sanitation. The various rules connected with the subject in Chapters VI and XVI and Appendices II, III and IV of the Code should be strictly attended to from the very outset. It is useless spending large sums on the support of thousands of people on relief works, if adequate action is not taken to prevent their succumbing to an outbreak of cholera. If cholera breaks out on a work, the following is the procedure to be adopted:—

All probably infected materials, such as old clothes, rags, etc., belonging to the sufferers or those in contact with them should be destroyed, or at any rate be thoroughly disinfected; *chappars* and small huts, and all materials used for bedding should be burned; the charges should be broken up into as small gangs as is compatible with supervision and discipline: the gangs so formed should be either transferred to a new work at a distance from the infected area, or returned to their respective villages for employment there. All wells along the roads leading to the new work should be treated with permanganate of

potash: at the new works selected wells should be treated in the same way and the rest closed. In tracts where wells are scarce, an indispensable precaution is the placing of a guard over stagnant water to prevent people drinking it.

# CHAPTER VI.

## GRATUITOUS RELIEF, AND RELIEF GIVEN AT POOR-HOUSES AND KITCHENS.

(*Chapters VIII and IX and Appendices III and IV, of the Code.*)

### GRATUITOUS RELIEF.

83. According to the system prescribed by the Code, a complete organisation is established with the object of enquiring into the cases of persons who require assistance, and of administering relief to such persons, throughout the entire area which is distressed. This system was put to the test in Bengal in the two great famines of 1873-74 and 1896-97; and there is a consensus of opinion that it is suitable. As indicated in paragraph 48, Chapter IV of this Manual, the success of the operations will mainly depend on the care with which the relief lists are prepared and maintained. The

Section 174 of the Code.

classes of persons entitled to receive gratuitous relief are specified in section 174 of the Code.

Section 173 of the Code.

84. Particular attention should be paid as regards the time when the distribution of gratuitous relief should be begun. It is just as important that the relief given should be timely, as that it should not be too long deferred. As was pointed out by the Famine Commission of 1880, the seasonable grant of gratuitous relief prevents that movement of the people which breaks up the frame-work of village society. If relief is not given when the pinch of want is really felt, numbers of people will begin to wander aimlessly in search of food. The persons who will first require assistance will, for obvious reasons, be the paupers, who, in ordinary circumstances, maintain themselves by begging. The time comes, however, when the dependents of those who are usually maintained by their relatives are obliged to fall back on the State for assistance. If the grant of relief is delayed beyond this point, people will die whose lives could be saved. If, on the other hand, help is given before it is absolutely required, demoralisation will necessarily ensue.

Section 181 of the Code.

85. The fortnightly period for which payments are made should, as laid down in the Code, invariably end on a Saturday; but the distribution day need not necessarily be the same everywhere. It may be found more convenient, in a district in which travelling is difficult, to arrange for several distributing centres in each circle, with different days for distribution. Discretion must, however, be exercised in the matter, because the more distribution days there are, the less time will the Circle Officer have for making his village enquiries, and the more difficult will it be for supervising officers to exercise their powers of control. Special provision may have to be made in the case of a few persons who cannot attend at the distribution centres. There is generally, however, some one to whom the duty of taking their allowances to such persons can be entrusted. Special enquiries should be made by the Circle Officer on this subject on the occasion of his periodical visit to the village; and, if necessary, the distribution can be made by him personally on such occasions.

Sections 40, 59, 182, and 193 of the Code.

86. Private agency should be utilised to the fullest extent for the purposes of ascertaining

what persons are in real need of gratuitous relief, and of eliciting information as to the true circumstances of those who apply for this form of relief; and, for obvious reasons, such agency is particularly useful in the case of *purdanashin* women. Volunteers will usually take a more prominent part in the administration of this form of relief in towns than in rural areas. In order, however, to secure uniformity of treatment in such cases, it will be advisable to appoint an officer of Government to finally pass all persons recommended for relief. Also, officers of Government only should usually be employed for the purpose of actually distributing the allowances or doles, whether in towns or in rural areas. Volunteers should be selected solely on account of their working efficiency, and never merely because candidates may happen to be persons of social distinction.

Section 184 of the Code.

87. All recipients of gratuitous relief, who are able to perform any kind of labour, should be given some form of work suitable to their condition. On each distribution day, raw material should be given out to them sufficient to last till the next distribution day, when the finished articles should be taken from them.

The actual monetary value of the articles produced may not be very considerable; but it is highly important that the self-respect of those relieved should, in this way, be maintained.

Sections 217 to 220 of the Code.

88. Usually, there will be an expansion of gratuitous relief after the rains break, because many labourers will then leave the relief works in order to till their fields. Even, however, at this period great circumspection is necessary, and gratuitous relief should hardly ever be given to the able-bodied. Caution in this matter is particularly necessary when the task is raised for the express purpose of inducing the labourers to leave the works. It is obvious that, if gratuitous relief is given in such circumstances, the system will simply amount to refusing relief with one hand and giving it with the other.

Section 192 of the Code.

89. The procedure to be followed at the time of inspection is described in section 192 of the Code. The inspecting officer must be particularly careful to ascertain for himself that the names recorded in the village list represent individuals actually residing in the village. The entries in the Famine Expenditure Register (Form L—III) should also be

compared (1) with the numbers actually found in the village in receipt of relief, and (2) with the amounts remitted by the Charge Superintendent to the Circle Officer for expenditure under this head. In order to enable him to make this examination, the inspecting officer should bring with him a statement, signed by the Charge Superintendent, shewing the payments made by that officer to the Circle Officer.

90. In order to prevent duplicate sets of forms being used, the relief-tickets, and the pages of the village relief-list and of the Famine Expenditure Register, should be numbered and stamped, or signed, by the Charge Superintendent before issue to the Circle Officer. Also, stock-books should be kept by both these officers, shewing receipts and issues in respect of these forms. If recipients spoil or lose their relief-tickets, and duplicates have to be issued, the word "duplicate," with the number of the original ticket, should be endorsed on them.

Sections 73 and 74, and 99 and 100, of the Code.

91. The Circle Officer should be careful to work in a systematic and orderly manner. He should be provided with a map of his circle, and should learn how to make proper use of it. He should take up his

village enquiries in regular order, proceeding first to those villages where he anticipates that distress will be most severe. He should record in a paged note-book the result of the enquiries made by him concerning the recipients of relief; and should indicate, against each recipient's name, in column 3 of the Gratuitous Relief List (Form E—1), the page of the note-book where these particulars are to be found. These notes will prove very useful to him if, at some subsequent period, he has reason to doubt the accuracy of the information supplied to him in the first instance, and also if he has to explain to an inspecting officer the reason why the name of any particular recipient has been entered by him on the list or omitted from it. The Circle Officer should also keep short diaries of his tours and of the work done by him from day to day. Copies of these diaries should be sent by him every Saturday to the Charge Superintendent.

92. Circle Officers must insist on order being maintained when the distribution of relief is taking place. The recipients belonging to each village should be brought to the place of distribution under the charge of the village chaukidar; and this official may, with the sanction of the District Officer, be given

a small monthly payment in consideration of his services. The chaukidars are a poorly-paid class of officers; and, in famine times, they often have much difficulty in securing their salary. Hence, a small payment may reasonably be made to them for this unusual work. The Circle Officer must keep the chaukidar in strict subordination, and insist on his carrying out the orders given to him. He must never allow this official to suggest to him the names of persons to whom relief should be given.

93. The recipients belonging to each village should be kept together and arranged, class by class, according to their relief-ticket numbers. Children of tender age cannot, of course, be separated from their parents. When the latter have received their allowances or doles, they should take their children to their places in their proper classes. Before the Circle Officer begins the distribution, he should call over the names entered in the lists, and ascertain that every one is in his place. Troublesome persons who refuse to keep their places should be made to wait until every one else has been given his allowance or dole.

94. The Circle Officer should never allow his arrangements to be upset by new applicants for relief.

Sections 185 and 186 of the Code.

Such persons should be kept entirely apart from the others; and, except in very unusual circumstances, relief should not be given to them till enquires have been made in their villages as to whether they are deserving of assistance. This is a matter in which great firmness will have to be shown, especially in the early stages of famine when village enquiries have not been completed. Starving persons and wanderers, whose homes cannot be traced, should either be sent to a poor-house, or be given temporary relief in a village, under the charge of the villiage chaukidar, till they can be sent to such an institution. If the procedure above indicated is not carefully followed, the gratuitous relief system is liable to be disorganised by people wandering from centre to centre in search of relief. It is a matter of familiar experience that the news that promiscuous relief is obtainable by all comers spreads with marvellous rapidity among the beggar classes. Enormous crowds will then collect; and the distribution of alms will degenerate into a disorderly scramble, at which the most noisy and violent will secure all the releif. Such scenes are often witnessed at private distributions of alms.

95. If relief is given in the form of grain, the work will be disposed of much quicker if a measure is used, instead of weights. Whether the grain is weighed or measured, great care must be taken to see that fraud is not committed by the use of inaccurate weights or measures.

Form E—VI of the Code.

96. The weekly returns should be examined in order to ascertain whether the numbers relieved are unduly increasing, and, where this seems to be the case, immediate and special enquiries must be made. This information can be gathered from the return in Form E—VI, which shews, at its foot, the average number of persons in receipt of relief during the last period under report, or, if that is not found convenient, the number in receipt of relief on the last day of the period under report.

97. Attempts have been made, at various times, to control the grant of gratuitous relief by comparing the numbers in receipt of this form of relief with the numbers on relief works. In the famine of 1896-97, over 30 *per cent.* of the population relieved were in receipt of gratuitous relief in the United Provinces, and over 22 *per cent.* in Madras. In

the Central Provinces, during the famine of 1899-1900, more than half the popualtion relieved was in receipt of this form of relief. This was also the case in Bengal at one period of the famine of 1896-97. This circumstance was much discussed at the time; and the explanation given was that it was due to the density and poverty of the population, and to the fact that the strict enforcement of the prescribed tasks had led to a reduction in the numbers on relief works. Whatever was the real cause, it was generally admitted that gratuitous relief was given with ample liberality in this province on that occasion. If, therefore, the percentage of persons gratuitously relieved rises above the corresponding figures of 1897, there will certainly be cause for enquiry.

### POOR-HOUSES AND KITCHENS.

98. It is of the utmost importance that discipline and order should be maintained at these institutions; and great care must be taken to see that the quality of the food given is suitable, and that the prices paid for it are fair.

Sections 194 to 207, and Appendix III of the Code.

99. The rules concerning the grant of gratuitous relief at poor-houses are laid down in sections 194 to 207 of Chapter IX, and Appendix III, of the Code; and it is hardly necessary to add much to the instructions therein given. Poor-houses have not hitherto constituted a conspicuous feature in Bengal famines. The beggars relieved at these institutions usually arrive in a very destitute condition, and require special treatment. Relief should never be refused at a poor-house. It should be remembered, however, that the relief given is intended to be merely temporary, except in the case of the very aged, sick, and infirm, who have no relatives or friends to whose care they can be entrusted. In ordinary circumstances, inmates of poor-houses, who are fit to work, should be drafted off, as soon as possible, to relief works; while those who are unable to work should be sent to their villages and be given gratuitous relief there. In practice, poor-houses tend to become hospitals or infirmaries. When this is the case, the rations prescribed by the Code become quite inadequate; and the medical officer should be allowed a free hand in all matters connected with dieting.

Sections 208 to 216, and Appendix IV, of the Code.

100. The main principles governing the grant of relief at kitchens are embodied in section 208 of the Code; while detailed instructions as regards the procedure to be followed in this matter are to be found in sections 209 to 216 of Chapter IX and Appendix IV of the Code. In Bengal, there have, in practice, been four distinct methods of administering this form of relief:—

(1) In order to relieve dependents on works.

(2) In order to relieve children, whose parents are unwilling or unable to maintain them.

(3) As a substitute for gratuitous relief in the villages.

(4) With the object of closing a famine.

Inasmuch as dependents will, as far as possible, be drafted off from relief works and be relieved in their villages, method No. (1) is not of great importance. Method No. (2) is generally regarded as unobjectionable; the opening of a kitchen for children making it certain that the relief reaches the persons for whom it is intended. If doles intended for children, whether in the shape of grain or

money, are given to the parents, it is possible that the children may not obtain the amount of food which they require. If grain is readily procurable in the villages, as is usually the case, resort will seldom be had to method No. (3). It may, however, be usefully applied when very few persons apply for admission to relief works, but many, who do not shew symptoms of distress, clamour for gratuitous relief. Also, if there has been delay in making the regular village enquiries, and it is considered that some assistance should be given at once, it may be convenient to adopt this form of relief. Method No. (4) was worked with success in the district of Darbhanga in 1897. People, who towards the close of the operations there, were still willing enough to accept gratuitous relief in the shape of money allowances, were found not to be in such need of help as to be ready to accept kitchen relief. This test was, therefore, found to be useful at this stage.

# CHAPTER VII.

## CLOSING REMARKS.

101. Finally, it may be observed that there is, for obvious reasons, no finality as regards famine procedure. Each successive famine brings into prominence certain aspects of famine relief, or throws new light on questions which have already formed the subject of discussion. The great Orissa famine of 1866-67 drew attention to the prime necessity of saving life; the famine in Bihar of 1873-74 emphasised the importance of guarding against extravagance in expenditure; while the famine of 1896-97 especially brought to notice the necessity of strictly enforcing the prescribed tasks. Future famines will likewise, no doubt, reveal defects in the present regulations; and it will rest, in the first instance, with the officers in charge of the operations to grapple with the new problems as they arise.

# APPENDIX.

THOSE parts of this Manual, and of the Bengal Famine Code, which are indicated below, should be specially studied by the officers of the several classes indicated :—

*I—Charge Superintendent.*

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| Paragraphs 27 to 31, Chapter III ; Chapters IV, V, and VI ; | of the Manual. |
| Sections 96 to 100, Chapter V ; Chapters VI and VII, and Appendix II ; The instructions at pages 168-169 ; Chapter VIII ; Sections 280 to 292, 298 to 311, and 314, Chapter XVII ; Appendix I, part XVI ; | of the Code. |

Also, if he is called on to supervise kitchens, the Charge Superintendent should study sections 208 to 216, Chapter IX, and Appendix IV, of the Code.

*II.—Officers in charge of relief works, and superior officers who inspect such works.*

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|---|---|
| Paragraphs 40 to 47 and 49, Chapter IV ; Chapter V | of the Manual. |

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| Sections 97 and 98, Chapter V;<br>Chapters VI and VII, and Appendix II;<br>The instructions at pages 168-169;<br>Sections 280 to 292, 298 to 311, and 314, Chapter XVII;<br>Appendix I, part XVIII; | of the Code. |

*III.—Circle Officer.*

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| Paragraph 33, Chapter III;<br>Paragraphs 48 to 51, Chapter IV;<br>Chapter VI; | of the Manual. |
| Sections 73 and 74, Chapter IV;<br>Sections 99 and 100, Chapter V;<br>Chapter VIII;<br>Sections 280 to 292, 298 to 311, and 314, Chapter XVII;<br>Appendix I, Part XVII; | of the Code. |

Also, if he is called on to assist at kitchens, the Circle Officer should study sections 208 to 216, Chapter IX, and Appendix IV, of the Code. And, if special relief has to be given by him to weavers and other artisans, he should also make himself acquainted with Chapter XIII of the Code.

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